"SHOWING UP" THE WORKING GIRLS' TROTTERIE

BEING A WHIMSICAL ACCOUNT OF A REPORTER'S ATTEMPT AT MUCKRAKING, AND HER FALL—INTO LOVE, WITH THE MUCKRAKEES.

By Lucy Huffaker.
Illustrated by Ethel Plummer.

Take you, for instance; did you ever have so many dances taken at a party where you knew everybody!"

"I staged a little play—I was Miss Gray, a lonely upstate stenographer with no friends. I checked my coat and walked out near the big oval where the dancers were one-stepping" . . . And then things began to happen.

O you ever stage in your mind a little play, casting yourself (of course) for the leading rôle, and then when you came to act it out have to rewrite all your lines? Or did you ever hold an imaginary conversation with some one, giving to yourself (if it goes without saying) the brilliant epigrams to offset his bromide remarks, and then when you met that one have him disconcert you by not saying any of the things you had planned for him to say?

Or did you ever plan to hurl an unfinished proposition in the teeth of some one and then haughtily withdraw, only to leave that promise more than fulfilled?

If you have done any of these things you will know how I felt when first I visited the new dance hall—yes, of course, I mean the one which Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, Miss Anne Morgan, Miss Elisabeth Marbury and Miss Elsie de Wolfe have opened on the roof of the Strand Theatre. I read the accounts of the opening listlessly, until suddenly I came upon something which, because I did not believe it, interested me. Everything, except that one thing, which was said about the new dance hall I accepted as a statement of fact. Beautiful? Miss de Wolfe had decorated it, which was answer enough. Floor perfect and music of the best? Probably. Food palatable and cheap? Without tasting or paying for it I'd grant that.

But there was just one thing I did not believe. I did not believe that a lonely person could go to the dance hall, be introduced by "hostesses" and have a good time. In my unbelief I went so far as to think that probably none of the women in charge of the hall had meant to state that as a fact. I had a strong suspicion that some sentimental reporter had put that statement in his story to give it "punch."

However, having just read what Samuel Adams had to say of honest advertising, I was determined to "show up" the dance hall for what it really was.

So, unbelieving, I staged in my mind a little play; I held an imaginary conversation; I planned to hurl an unfulfilled promise in the teeth of Mrs. Vanderbilt, Miss Morgan, Miss Marbury and Miss de Wolfe. Determined to do the thing thoroughly, I even had witnesses with me in a party of friends who, by their actions, disclaimed all acquaintance with me from the moment we stepped into the elevator to ascend to the roof.

I had a very good story which I had rehearsed to myself. I was a Miss Gray, stenographer, from an upstate town, in New York for five months, during which time I had made no acquaintances whatsoever outside of the office. Of social life I had had none. I did my best to look pensive and lonely. I was afraid I would not have a chance to tell my story. And I did not tell any of it except the name. But this was for a different reason than the one I had imagined. I had thought I would sit alone all evening, with no one to tell it to. Far from it! I checked my coat and walked out near the big oval floor where the dancers were one-stepping. I looked wistfully at them.

"Wouldn't You Like to Meet Our Guests?"

Then a woman in an evening gown came up to me and asked me if I were looking for friends. I said I was not. I said I was alone. I meant to go on and tell the pathetic little story about myself which I had been rehearsing. But I had no chance. For she said to me, "Wouldn't you like to be introduced to some of our guests?"

I murmured that I would be charmed, and then she said to me: "You like to dance, don't you?" I assured her I did.

And in such wise did my little plot against Mrs. Vanderbilt, Miss Morgan, Miss Marbury and Miss De Wolfe fall down. For from that moment I had no chance to say any of those lines I had made up for myself. The "hostess," Mrs. Dean, excused herself for a moment, asking me to sit at one of the little tables where she could find me. Then in a few moments she came back and introduced me to a young man, who asked me to dance. When the dance was finished and I had come back to my little table, Mrs. Dean seemed to be waiting for me. At least, she had another young man with her, who was introduced to me and with whom I danced.

After several dances I wandered over into one corner of the hall where there are reading tables and big shaded lamps and magazines. I had seen a magazine which I wished to read. And, anyway, I thought Mrs. Dean had done her full duty by me. Perhaps her stock of young men who could be introduced to a lonely girl would be exhausted. I picked up the magazine and opened it. I read one paragraph and then I heard some one begging my pardon for interrupting. I looked up and saw a woman in a black evening gown, smiling at me.

"I am Miss Marbury," she said, "and I am wondering if I can't introduce you to some one."

"I am Miss Gray," I murmured, holding on in desperation to that one line which the circumstances were allowing me to retain from all those I had rehearsed.

I assured Miss Marbury that I liked to dance, and in a moment she came up with three young men, whom she introduced to me. So for the space of three dances I had no time to read that magazine in which I was interested.

"Is this your first visit here?" asked the young man who led me out to fox trot. I said it was.

"I came up the first night just to see what it was like," he said, "and I've been back every night since. I like to dance and I like this place. I've been in New York just a few weeks, and I haven't any acquaintances at all outside of business."

"Is your name, by any chance, Gray?" I asked laughingly.

"My name is Thompson," he said seriously. I had thought for a moment that perhaps he, like myself, was at the dance hall for what might be called an ulterior motive, but his answer was too reassuring to hold to the belief that he was after "copy."

Attended Every Night Since Opening.

Mr. Thompson is not the only person who has been to the Strand Roof every night since it has opened. One of the young men to whom Miss Marbury had introduced me smiled to a couple as they waltzed past us.

"Those people are dance fans," he said. "He is an artist whom I knew in Paris. She is his wife. They have just come back after several years on the other side. They haven't many friends and they like to dance. Their studio is just a few blocks away and they come up every evening and dance for a couple of hours."

The third young man was a real stranger in the city. He was staying at a nearby hotel, and, attracted by the electric sign, had come up.

"I feel rather queer," he confided to me. "I hadn't expected to be treated as if I were a guest in somebody's home, and that is just the way I have been treated. Somehow I feel as if I were getting something under false pretences."

"Is your name, by any chance, Gray?" I asked again.

"My name," he said seriously, "is Caswell."

"I had some friends once by that name," I said. It developed that they were his cousins. He had visited them often in my home town, and he knew—but this is no place to run the directory of Marshalltown, Iowa.

"I feel better since we have friends in common," he said to me. "It makes it seem more natural that I should be treated like a guest. But why did you think my name was Gray?"

"I don't know," I said, and murmured something about never getting names right. But I did know why I thought it—I was suspicious of every person there who said he or she was lonely. I felt they were all like myself. But now I am positive that I was the only impostor there that evening.

Friends the Only Snobbish Ones.

I had given the friends who had come with me to the hall strict orders not to show that they knew me. I will say for them that they acted their parts well. In fact, it seemed to me that that one little group was the only one in all the hall which acted haughty and snobbish. As I danced past them they stared at me in a coldly appraising way. Once one of the men of the party wandered over near the reading tables. He sat down and began to scribble on a piece of paper. I felt that he was plotting something against me. But he had no chance to go on with his nefarious scheme, for Miss Marbury, thinking he, too, was lonely, introduced herself to him, and in another moment was presenting him to me.

"I was going to throw a note to you," he confessed, "just to give you something for your story. But, heavens! one doesn't get a chance here to do things like that. Somebody is always introducing somebody to somebody else. Take you, for instance—did you ever have so many dances taken at a party where you knew everybody?"

Which question, while it may have been true, was so uncomplimentary that I passed it over in a dignified silence.

There were other young men to be presented to me, but I suddenly began to feel, as Mr. Caswell had expressed it, that I was getting something under false pretences. Anyway, some friends of mine, not knowing what I was doing, had come in and called me loudly by my name. If Miss Marbury noticed that it was not the name I had given her she did not betray it. But it seemed to me it was about time for me to step out of my part. So I told her all about the little plot.

"Is it a narrow escape we've had?" she asked, laughingly.

"Well," I answered, "as I've danced every dance and as I haven't had a chance to tell my pathetic little story all evening, I should say you had a wide margin of safety."

Then we sat down at one of the little tables and had a talk about the new dance hall.

Want Lonely Girls and Young Men.

"It is just such girls as you claimed to be that we want especially to come here," Miss Marbury said. "There must be lots of lonely girls and young men, too, for that matter in New York. This is a place where they can come and for a small sum have a pleasant evening. They can come in little parties, and then, of course, they don't need any special attention. But there will always be some one to watch out for the person who comes in alone and who wants to dance. Of course, we aren't doing any charity work or anything like that. This is a business proposition, and it is going to be a paying one."

"I should think so," I answered, as I looked around the big hall and saw every table taken and the floor crowded with dancers.

"There is really nothing so extraordinary about having a dance hall with an admission of 50 cents. Of course, lots of people told us we were crazy to try to do the thing on Broadway, but the crowds which are coming would seem to prove that we were right in asserting it could be done. But we aren't posing as doing any charitable thing at all."

Need 10-Cent Dance Halls.

"There's just one thing I wish," I said. "I wish you'd open a dance hall where the admission is only 10 or 15 cents. Then you'd get the real lonely ones. You couldn't have it where the rents are as high as this, of course, and you couldn't have such beautiful decorations, or quite such good music. But I wish it could be done, and with the same spirit that this is—without any of the condescending attitude which goes with a charitable institution."

I felt myself about to grow eloquent over the crying need for 10-cent dance halls, but just then Miss Marbury was called away by one of the hostesses to meet some friends who had come in.

By this time it was growing late and a number of theatre and opera parties had dropped in. Mrs. Reginald Vanderbilt came in, ate her supper from a menu on which nothing cost more than 20 cents, and danced every dance until the "Home, Sweet Home" waltz was played.

There were two things which I felt I must do before I had altogether tested the dance hall. I must take instruction from the dancing teachers and I must have something to eat. Signs, not too conspicuous, informed one that tickets entitling the holder to three dances with an instructor could be purchased for 50 cents. I purchased the ticket. To my surprise the instructor who was brought was one of the young men I had met first when I entered the hall.

"But if you're an instructor why do you dance without being paid for it?" I asked.

"Oh, we dance with the guests, of course," he informed me. "There are several young men to dance with the women, and young women to dance with the men."

"But you're not giving me a lesson," I protested, after we had been around the floor twice.

Can Arrange for Regular Dance Lesson.

"Those who want to arrange for regular lessons can do so," he said.

"But here all we do is to dance with the pupil, telling him or her anything to correct mistakes, and explaining as we go along what to do. Now, take eight running steps backward before going into eight slow walking steps."

And so the lesson went.

Then I decided to eat my supper. After four hours of almost steady dancing I was hungry. I did not deny myself anything. I felt I had done a good evening's work and was in the class with Little Tommy Tucker, who had sung for his supper. My check came to 50 cents.

"Your food is all right, too," I said to Miss Marbury as she passed my table.

"Introduce me to your friend," laughed the woman who was with her. In such wise did I meet Miss Anne Morgan.

"Would you mind saying those kind words about the food again?" said Miss Morgan. "You know when you say that you're talking. My end of this concern is the kitchen. And I don't want the dancing to get all the attention."

"It won't," I said, "if you serve food like this all the time."

"We do—we will," Miss Morgan hastened to assure me. "And we're doing a rushing business. Each day at luncheon we serve 150 more people than we did the day before, and the tea crowds are large, too. We're proving that good food can be served for little money. You understand that this is a business proposition. We aren't posing as doing anything charitable at all. But we do claim to give a good return on anybody's money. That is why Mrs. Vanderbilt and I are up here every day helping serve the luncheon. Everybody can rest assured that so long as Mrs. Vanderbilt stands near that cafeteria counter there will be no skimping on the portions."

Miss Marbury had hurried away. Over in the corner she had seen two girls sitting alone. She had gone over to introduce herself to them and to find them partners for the dance.

"There is just one thing I'd like to ask you," I said to Miss Morgan. "Your aim, you say, is to run a respectable dance hall at a reasonable price. So far as my observation goes, I'd say you are doing that very thing. I certainly was never in a more respectable place in all my life. But how can you be sure you won't be introducing what you would call 'undesirables' up here?"

"For one thing," said Miss Morgan in a businesslike manner, "the fact that we serve nothing but soft drinks has a great deal to do with it. And our hostesses are chaperons as well, you see. Then there is so much in the atmosphere of a place, to use an overworked phrase. Isn't there something about the general tone of the place which would impress any one coming in as respectable?"

I looked around the big room, almost surrounded by windows, and at the soft grays and greens of the walls and tables and hangings, and Miss Morgan and I stood agreed as to the atmosphere of the place. Then I began to think again what a good thing it would be if there were ten-cent dance halls patterned after this one.

A Dance Hall for O. Henry's "Dulcie."

There is Dulcie, for instance—the girl in O. Henry's "Unfinished Story." Dulcie who, you will remember, "of what she earned received $6 per week" and could never spend half a dollar for an evening's amusement. But she could spend a dime now and then. And if she could, perhaps the story would not have to be, as O. Henry assures us it was, unfinished, because "the rest of it comes later—some time when Piggy asks Dulcie again to dine with him, and she is feeling lonelier than usual; and then"——

I think I would have been truly eloquent if I had told about all the Dulcies in New York and their crying need for ten-cent dance halls, run with none of that condescending attitude of charitable institutions, but just then the orchestra began playing "Home, Sweet Home"—it was a quarter past twelve—and my friends were signalling to me that it was time to go home. I looked for my hostesses to tell them good night and thank them for a pleasant evening, for I felt, like Mr. Caswell, that I had been entertained at a party in some one's home.

And here endeth the little story of my plot against the new dance hall. But some time I'm going back and talk to them about ten-cent dance halls. And it isn't altogether of the Dulcies I'm thinking. There is, for instance, myself—at ten cents I could go five times, instead of once!

Miss Anne Morgan, Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, Sr., and Miss Elisabeth Marbury, Who Narrowly Escaped an "Investigation."

Aristocracy Was Also Present, to Observe, and Then to Participate.

ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

By ALICE DUER MILLER

BEGINNING AT HOME.

If only President Wilson had said:

"I hold it as a fundamental principle, and so do you, that every people has the right to determine its own form of government . . . and until recently the women of America, 50 per cent of the people, have not had a 'look in' in determining who should be their governors, or what their government should be. Now I am for the 50 per cent. . . . The liberty, if they can get it, is theirs. And so far as my influence goes while I am President, nobody shall interfere with them."

He did use almost these exact words, but his enthusiasm was roused for the liberty of the men of Mexico—not for that of his own countrywomen.

TO PRESIDENT WILSON.

Wise and just man—for such I think you are—
How can you see so burningly and clear
Injustices and tyrannies afar,
Yet blind your eyes to one that lies so near?
How can you plead so earnestly for men
Who fight their own fight with a bloody hand:
How hold their cause so wildly dear, and then
Forget the women of your native land?
With your stern ardor and your scholar's word,
You speak to us of human liberty;
Can you believe that women are not stirred
By this same human longing to be free?
He who for liberty would strike a blow
Need not take arms, or fly to Mexico.

("Now, there is one thing I have got a great enthusiasm about—I might almost say a reckless enthusiasm—and that is human liberty."—Mr. Wilson's Jackson Day Speech.)

To suffragists, who have heard the President so often refuse even to express an opinion of woman suffrage, there seems nothing at all reckless in his enthusiasm for human liberty.

IF NOT COARSE, IS IT AN ARGUMENT?

A dispatch from Washington fears that an injustice was done to Mr. Bowdle, of Ohio, while he was speaking against woman suffrage in the debate of Tuesday. The acoustics of the House are so bad that the galleries seemed to imagine that "a coarse argument had been used."

This is what Mr. Bowdle was saying, in speaking of the personal charms of the women of Washington: "Their feet are beautiful, their ankles are beautiful, but here I must pause"——

THE GIRL IS MOTHER TO THE WOMAN, APPARENTLY.

Of the defendants in our Children's Court last year 11,452 were boys and 2,464 were girls.

Of the criminals throughout the country over 90 per cent are male and less than 10 per cent female.

IF PEOPLE, BAD PEOPLE.

An anti-suffrage speaker, engaged in attacking, not the principles of democracy, but women as a sex, declared recently that statistics prove that women are more unfaithful in marriage than men.

Even "The New York Times" felt it necessary to protest editorially against this statement.

"The wife," it says, "who knows of her husband's wrongdoing will often hide it, and present to the world a brave front. . . . But the man who knows of his wife's wrongdoing and is merciful is so rare that he would not figure heavily in a census of family troubles."

ANOTHER GOOD WORD FOR WOMEN.

A writer in "The New Age" seems to have discovered that Germany is fighting for the masculine ideal, threatened by feminism in Europe. He says:

"We begin to see that peace is a dream and is not even a lovely dream, for it implies the establishment of female supremacy, and the consequent subjection of man to the purposes of woman. . . . Germany's bid for world-dominion is, in this aspect, a denial of the feminist ideal. . . . One result may be predicted—the tradition of war will be maintained and the natural antagonism of the sexes intensified. The cause of feminism will not be victorious. . . . The glory of war is revived, the spirit of nationality is awakened, and with it a host of ideals that put men beyond the reach of the purposes of women.

HIS PLACE IS HIS CAGE.

Put Double Chains on Gunda—Keepers Say He Likes It—Even When He Was Allowed to Go Into His Yard He Preferred His Cage.—Headline.

Where have we heard reasoning like this before?
A good elephant prefers his cage.
Therefore he prefers to be chained in it.
If he doesn't prefer to be chained in it, he isn't a really good elephant.

Women love self-sacrifice,
Suffering and good advice.
If they don't love these sincerely,
Then they're not true women, really.
Oh, it shocks me so to note
Women pleading for the vote!
Saying publicly it would
Educate and do them good.
Such a selfish reason trips
Oddly from a woman's lips.
But it must not be supposed
I am in the least opposed.
If they want it, let them try it.
I think men will profit by it